
CALVINISM



Analyzed and Answered

Gene Taylor

Table of Contents

Preface

Important Notice

Table of Contents

Lesson 1: Introduction

Introduction

I. PreCalvin Calvinism

II. John Calvin

III. The Basis of Calvinism

IV. The Five Basic Tenets of Calvinism

Conclusion

Lesson 2: Total Hereditary Depravity

Introduction

I. Total Hereditary Depravity Expressed

II. Proof Texts Used to Support Total Hereditary Depravity

III. Consequences of the Doctrine of Total Hereditary Depravity

IV. Scriptural Objections to Total Hereditary Depravity

H. 1Corinthians 14:20.

Conclusion

Lesson Three: Unconditional Election

Introduction

I. Unconditional Election Expressed

B. The Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.

C. The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689.

D. Calvin's Institutes.

II. Predestination Defined

III. Proof Texts Used to Support Unconditional Election

C. Romans 8:28-30.

IV. Scriptural Objections to Unconditional Election

Conclusion

Lesson Four: Limited Atonement

Introduction

I. Limited Atonement Expressed

B. The Westminster Shorter Catechism.

II. Proof Texts Used to Support Limited Atonement

III. Scriptural Objections to Limited Atonement

Conclusion

Lesson Five: Irresistible Grace

Introduction

I. Irresistible Grace Expressed

B. David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas.

II. Proof Texts Used to Support Irresistible Grace

Conclusion

Lesson Six: Perseverance of the Saints

Introduction

I. Perseverance of the Saints Expressed

B. David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas.

II. The Calvinistic Doctrine of Imputation

III. Proof Texts Used to Support the Perseverance of the Saints

IV. Scriptural Objections to Perseverance of the Saints

M. 2 Peter 2:1.

Conclusion

The Fall of Calvinism

T-U-L-I-P

Bibliography

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Preface

The influence of John Calvin and the doctrines he formulated are found in nearly all of the Protestant denominations. They have also crept into the thoughts and teachings of those who claim to follow the New Testament pattern for work and worship.

Since Calvinism's influence is so widespread, it behooves every responsible person to see whether or not its teachings are in harmony with Scripture. All should be as those noble Bereans of Acts 17:11 who went to the Scriptures to see if the teachings of the apostle were in agreement with the message of Scripture before they accepted them.

This study considers the doctrines of Calvinism then compares and contrasts them to Scripture to see if they stand or fall in light of God's word.

These lessons were first presented as a series of sermons during February and March 1995 at the worship assemblies of the Centerville Road church of Christ, 4015 Centerville Road, Tallahassee, Florida 32308. They are being presented in this format so that those who are interested in coming to an understanding of the truth in relation to Calvinism might study them at length.

I would like to thank my good friend and fellow preacher Doug Focht, Jr., not only for proof-reading the drafts of this booklet and correcting my punctuation and grammar but also for his suggestions which clarified and strengthened a number of points in several lessons.

May God bless you in your pursuit of the truth, not only on this subject but also on all themes which pertain to the salvation of your soul.

Gene Taylor

Tallahassee, Florida

March 1995

The Curiosities of Calvinism

*“When you get religion; you don’t want it
If you want it; you haven’t got it;
When you want it, you can’t get it;
If you get it, you can’t lose it
For if you lose it, you never had it.”*

(Zachary - Smith Debate, title page)

Important Notice

Dear Reader, when reading this book, please repeat aloud the words below for the entire time:

I love God. I love everyone. I hate sin. I love reading doctrines.

It will not significantly interfere with your concentration.

Table of Contents

Preface

Table of Contents

Lesson 1: Introduction

Lesson 2: Total Hereditary Depravity

Lesson 3: Unconditional Election

Lesson 4: Limited Atonement

Lesson 5: Irresistible Grace

Lesson 6: Perseverance of the Saints

The Fall of Calvinism

Bibliography

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Lesson 1: Introduction

Introduction

- 1. Calvinism is basic to nearly all the religious questions that the Christian will answer when talking to those who are in denominations because it permeates almost all denominations.**
- 2. Whenever someone contends that faith is a gift from God, affirms that he has been saved by faith only, embraces false teachings about the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in the conviction and conversion of sinners or believes it is impossible for a child of God to sin and be eternally lost, he has fallen victim to the Calvinist system of doctrine.**
- 3. Calvinism is also found in most cults, even those which claim to avoid denominational doctrines. The Jehovah's Witnesses, for example, embrace the doctrine of inherited sin, the foundation doctrine of Calvinism.**
- 4. Calvinism has also become a danger and threat to the church of the Lord.**
 - a. Decades ago, preachers used to preach upon it frequently but now it is rare to hear an entire sermon on it.**

b. Many members of the church think it is wrong because it “sounds” wrong or because Mom, Dad or the preacher said it was wrong. They cannot begin to tell anyone why it is wrong.

5. This study will develop the historical background of Calvinism and then examine its fundamental tenets by comparing them to the standard of plain, Biblical teaching.

I. PreCalvin Calvinism

A. Many of the fundamental concepts of Calvinism existed before John Calvin

1. The fundamental tenet of *total hereditary depravity* was not original to Calvin. The Roman Catholic philosopher Augustine taught it in the fifth century A.D.

2. The Reformation had already begun and the leading reformers taught doctrines similar to those of Calvin.

B. Martin Luther, the first great reformer.

1. Born in Eisleben, Germany in 1483, he entered a monastery at age 22 in 1505. Two years later he was ordained a priest.

2. During the winter of 1512-13 he began to see some errors in the Catholic Church.

a. In 1517 he nailed his famous 95 theses to the door of the church building in Wittenburg, Germany in which he proclaimed the errors of the Catholic Church.

b. His three greatest objections to Catholicism were the selling of indulgences, the authority of the Pope and the doctrine of transubstantiation.

3. After much criticism and church trials, he was excommunicated from the church but he continued to preach against the errors which

he had found.

4. The greatest error in his teachings was justification by “faith only.”
 - a. This doctrine teaches that men are saved at the point of faith in Christ without further acts of obedience.
 - b. This doctrine stands as one of the basic tenets of Calvinism.

II. John Calvin

- A. John Calvin was born in Noyon, France July 10, 1509.
- B. He began the study of the classics in Paris in 1523 at the age of fourteen.
- C. Because of his skill at disputation, his father sent him to study law at the University of Orleans in 1528 and later in Bourges.
 1. After his father’s death in 1531, he returned to Paris to study the classics and Hebrew.
 2. It was at that time he became interested in the principles of the Reformation.
- D. After experiencing what he later termed a “sudden conversion,” variously dated from 1529 to 1534, he began preaching Reformation doctrines in Paris.
 1. To avoid government persecution, he traveled from place to place.
 2. In 1536 he settled in Switzerland.
- E. In Basel, Switzerland in 1536 he completed the first version of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.
 1. He intended it to be only a brief manual stating the doctrines of the Protestants.
 2. In reality it contained a complete outline of his system of theology.

3. This work was based on the principle that the Scriptures are the sole source of truth in religion.

4. It was later revised and enlarged.

F. In 1536, at the request of religious reformer Guillaume Farel (1489-1565), he settled in Geneva, Switzerland.

1. He acquired a large following and was elected preacher by the city magistrates.

2. He compiled a systematic Protestant confession of faith of 21 articles which the citizens were required to profess under oath.

3. He wrote the first *Geneva Catechism* (1536) for use in religious instruction.

4. The reforms he advocated were so extreme that he alienated many of his adherents and provoked strong political opposition.

G. Exiled from Geneva in 1538, he went to Strasbourg, France and became a pastor and professor of theology.

1. In Geneva, irreligion and disorder became prevalent during his absence.

2. He was persuaded to return to Geneva in 1541.

H. After returning to Geneva, he revised the laws of the city.

1. He organized a theocratic form of government for the control of both the social and religious life of its citizens.

2. His second *Geneva Catechism* (1542) became the standard of doctrines for most of the Reformed churches in Europe.

I. His rigid dogmatism and severe discipline led to more controversies.

1. Not only were they with Roman Catholicism but also with other religious reformers.

2. His differences with Martin Luther about the nature of the Lord's Supper resulted in the splitting of the evangelical churches into the Lutheran and Reformed groups.

3. One of the most acrimonious disputes of this period was with Spanish theologian Michael Servetus on the nature of the Godhead. Through Calvin's influence, Servetus was burned at the stake in 1553.

4. His strictness gave rise to discontent even among his followers in Geneva.

J. His political foes, known as the "Libertines," were expelled from Geneva in 1555.

1. For the next six years he deepened and extended his influence and that of Protestantism throughout Europe.

2. He systemized the doctrines of Protestantism and organized its ecclesiastical discipline.

3. He constructed and made a new church organization that consolidated the scattered forces of the Reformation

III. The Basis of Calvinism

A. The central idea of Calvinism is the sovereignty of God

1. "The one rock upon which Calvinism builds is that of the absolute and unlimited sovereignty of the eternal and self-existent Jehovah" (Ben A. Warburton, *Calvinism*, p. 169).

2. Calvin did not discover the sovereignty of God. He isolated it as idea.

a. His isolation of it is the problem.

b. He exalted the sovereignty of God to the exclusion of other truths of Scripture.

B. All of the five points of Calvinism flow from this basic premise.

- “These other doctrines are an expression of this one central theme. Thus if God is absolutely sovereign—the Alpha and Omega—then it follows that salvation depends entirely on him and not on man” (Edwin H. Palmer, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, p. 74).

C. This basis is set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Written by the Westminster Association from July, 1643 to February, 1649, it is the doctrinal foundation of English and American Presbyterianism.

1. “God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass” (*Confession of Faith*, Chapter III).

2. “By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished” (Ibid.).

IV. The Five Basic Tenets of Calvinism

A. The five basic doctrines of Calvinism are represented by the acronym T-U-L-I-P.

B. These doctrines are:

1. T = Total Hereditary Depravity. At birth all men are depraved wholly and totally. They are in this sinful condition because they have inherited it from their parents.

2. U = Unconditional Election. God, before the foundation of the world, arbitrarily chose to save some people and destroy others and nothing can be done to change God’s sovereign decree.

3. L = Limited Atonement. Christ died only for the ones God had unconditionally chosen to save.

4. I = Irresistible Grace. An unregenerate person cannot voluntarily

believe in God but once God determines to save him, that same individual cannot overcome or resist the power of God no matter what he may desire.

5. P = Perseverance of the Saints. Since man can do nothing but evil on his own, God's unconditional election is required to save him. Consequently, one needs to do nothing to remain saved. If one's salvation depended on himself in any way, the miraculous work of God in saving him would be overthrown.

Conclusion

1. Calvinism presents a false chain of reasoning. Instead of supporting the Truth of Scripture, it stands opposed to it.

2. A further analysis of each tenet will show how far this system of doctrine is from the inspired word of God.

Lesson 2: Total Hereditary Depravity

Introduction

1. As with the other four doctrines of Calvinism, the doctrine of Total Hereditary Depravity, also known as the doctrine of "original sin," is taught by a large number of denominations.

2. The phrase, "Total Hereditary Depravity," implies three things which Calvinists believe about the nature of all humans at birth.

a. They are depraved. They are caught up in and guilty of sin.

b. They are wholly or totally depraved. Nothing about them is good.

c. The sinful condition, depravity, in which they are born is hereditary—it comes to them from their parents.

3. This lesson will consider this doctrine by looking at:

- a. How it is expressed by denominations and individuals who teach it and the basic meaning of the terms used to express it.
- b. The proof texts used by its proponents to defend it.
- c. Its consequences if it were true.
- d. Some Scriptural objections to it.

I. Total Hereditary Depravity Expressed

A. The Westminster Confession of Faith.

“They (Adam and Eve, GT) being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.” (Chapter VI)

B. The Philadelphia Confession of Faith, the first creed adopted by the Baptist churches in the United States.

“Our first parents by the sin, fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and we in them, whereby death came upon all; all becoming dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all faculties, and parts of soul, and body.” (p. 24)

“They being the root, and by God’s appointment, standing in the room, and stead of all mankind, the guilt of their sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation, being now conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, the servants of sin, the subjects of death and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, unless the Lord Jesus sets them free.” (p. 24)

“From this original corruption whereby all are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.”

(p. 24)

C. The Augsburg Confession of Faith. Presented June 25, 1530, it contains the 28 articles which constitute the basic confession of the Lutheran churches.

“ ... That since the fall of Adam, all men ... are born with sin, that is without fear of God ... and this disease or vice of origin is truly sin even now in condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again ...”

D. John Wesley (1703-1791). He was “a leader of the Evangelical Revival and founder of the Methodist Church in Great Britain and America.” (*World Book Encyclopedia*, Vol. 21, p. 352)

“We are condemned before we have done good or evil, under the curse before we know what it is.” (*Sermons on Original Sin*, p. 340)

II. Proof Texts Used to Support Total Hereditary Depravity

A. Genesis 6:5.

Gen 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

1. The argument: Every intent of man’s heart was evil continually, therefore, all men were born totally depraved.

2. In the context, Noah was a “just man, perfect in his generations.” (v. 9)

Gen 6:9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

- 3.** The text states that “all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth” (v. 12), not that they were born corrupt.

Gen 6:12 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

- 4.** If this verse depicts Total Hereditary Depravity, then why was it not the same in the generations before that of Noah?

- a.** Why did not God destroy mankind sooner?

- b.** How is it, if all men were depraved, that in Genesis 4:26, “men began to call on the name of the Lord?”

Gen 4:26 When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. It was during his lifetime that people first began to worship the LORD.

B. Psalm 51:1-5.

Psa 51:1 A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. **Psa 51:2** Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. **Psa 51:3** For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. **Psa 51:4** Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. **Psa 51:5** Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

- 1.** The argument: Being conceived in sin and born in iniquity David was a sinner at birth.

- 2.** Nothing in the text or context says David was born a sinner.

- a.** David asks God to forgive his sin not his mother’s sin.

- b.** The mother could have conceived in sin but it does not logically

follow, neither does it state that the child inherits that sin.

3. David's parents were simply like all other men and women—sinners themselves who lived in a world of sin.

C. Psalm 53:1-3.

Psa 53:1 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good. Psa 53:2 God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Psa 53:3 Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Psa 53:4 Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread: they have not called upon God.

1. The argument: If no one does good, we must be born sinners.
2. The context states otherwise.
 - a. Why corrupt? They “have done abominable iniquity.” (v. 1)
 - b. Is it speaking of babies? A baby cannot “seek God.” (v. 2)
 - c. These have “turned aside” to sin (v. 3). They were not born in it.
 - d. These have “become corrupt” (v. 3). They were not born that way.

D. Psalm 58:3.

Psa 58:1 Michtam of David. Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men? Psa 58:2 Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth. Psa 58:3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Psa 58:4 Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; Psa 58:5 Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely. Psa 58:6 Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break

out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD. Psa 58:7 Let them melt away as waters which run continually: when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces. Psa 58:8 As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun. Psa 58:9 Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath. Psa 58:10 The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. Psa 58:11 So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

1. The argument: "The wicked are estranged (from God) from the womb."
2. Note the use of the phrase "go astray." They are not born wicked.
3. Babies are not under consideration in this passage.
 - a. "Speaking lies" indicates age.
 - b. They stop their ears (w. 4-5). They are old enough to understand.
 - c. Babies are not born with teeth, (v. 6)

E. Romans 3:19.

Rom 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

1. The argument: All the world is guilty of sin before God because they are born in sin.
2. Adam's sin or inherited depravity are not even mentioned.
3. The passage is simply stating that both Jews and Gentiles are guilty of sinning against God.
4. Note verse 12: "They have all turned aside." One cannot turn aside from that which he was not on in the first place.

Rom 3:12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

F. Romans 5:12-21.

Rom 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: **Rom 5:13** (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. **Rom 5:14** Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. **Rom 5:15** But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. **Rom 5:16** And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. **Rom 5:17** For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) **Rom 5:18** Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. **Rom 5:19** For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. **Rom 5:20** Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: **Rom 5:21** That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

1. The argument: The guilt of the sin of Adam, and thus depravity, has been passed unto all people.
2. While this is a difficult passage, there are two important things to remember which help us understand this text in its context.
 - a. "All sinned." (v. 12; cf. Rom. 3:23) People are subject to death because of their own sin.

Rom 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

b. “Life through the One, Jesus Christ.” (v. 17) Verse 17 teaches that both life and death are conditional. If we say that Adam’s sin brings automatic spiritual death, we must also say that Christ’s life brings automatic spiritual life.

3. It was the sentence of “death,” not sin, which spread to all men.

G. Romans 8:6, 7.

Rom 8:6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

1. The argument: The “carnal mind” (v. 7), refers to the unconverted.

2. Verses four and five show that the ones with carnal minds “walk according to the flesh.” It does not state that they are born in sin.

H. 1 Corinthians 2:14.

1Co 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1. The argument: The natural (sinful) man cannot understand and does not accept the things of God because he is inherently sinful.

2. The “natural man” does not refer to a sinful, depraved person who has inherited his parents’ sins.

a. It has reference to one who is concerned only about material, temporal things and who neglects spiritual responsibilities.

b. Such a one seeks earthly wisdom, not spiritual. (1 Cor. 1:18-25) He is contrasted in verse 14 with the spiritually-oriented person of verse 15.

1Co 2:15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

I. 1 Corinthians 15:22.

1Co 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

- 1. The argument: Adam brought physical death upon all people and every person who dies bears the guilt and penalty of Adam's sin.**
- 2. The answer: Does it not stand to reason, if all lost spiritual life in Adam, would not this passage also require that all people will have spiritual life in Jesus—that all will be saved? (cf. Matt. 7:13-14)**

Mat 7:13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Mat 7:14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

- 3. The penalty is inherent, not the guilt.**

J. 2 Corinthians 7:1.

2Co 7:1 Wherefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all pollution of flesh and spirit; perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

- 1. The argument: Both flesh and spirit are defiled.**
- 2. The answer: The text is addressing Christians telling them to cleanse themselves of all defilements of both flesh and spirit (Giving, by the way, the Calvinist doctrine of Perseverance of the Saints great difficulty).**

III. Consequences of the Doctrine of Total Hereditary Depravity

A. No unregenerate person can do good.

1. Every act of a non-Christian is sinful.

2. Even if a non-Christian helps an accident victim or the needy, he still sins, Calvinists say, because he does it with the wrong motive. It is impossible for him to have any right motives because he is totally depraved.

B. An individual's salvation lies entirely at the discretion of God. Nothing a person does affects his salvation.

C. God must take direct miraculous action to save a person's soul. Thus, the false concept of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of the sinner necessarily arises from the principle of Total Hereditary Depravity.

IV. Scriptural Objections to Total Hereditary Depravity

A. Exodus 32:31-33.

Exo 32:31 And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Exo 32:32 Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. Exo 32:33 And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.

1. Moses asked God to let him receive the punishment for the people's sins so that they could be spared.

2. In His answer, God lets all know that it is the ones who sin, not the ones born in sin, whose names are removed from the book of life.

B. Deuteronomy 1:34-39. The Israelites could not enter the promised

land because of sin but their children could.

Deu 1:34 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying, Deu 1:35 Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers, Deu 1:36 Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD. Deu 1:37 Also the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither. Deu 1:38 But Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. Deu 1:39 Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.

C. Ecclesiastes 7:29. God made man upright. He is not depraved when born. Rather, he is without sin.

Ecc 7:29 I discovered that God created people to be upright, but they have each turned to follow their own downward path." NLT

D. Isaiah 59:1-8.

Isa 59:1 Listen! The LORD is not too weak to save you, and he is not becoming deaf. He can hear you when you call. Isa 59:2 But there is a problem—your sins have cut you off from God. Because of your sin, he has turned away and will not listen anymore. Isa 59:3 Your hands are the hands of murderers, and your fingers are filthy with sin. Your mouth is full of lies, and your lips are tainted with corruption. Isa 59:4 No one cares about being fair and honest. Their lawsuits are based on lies. They spend their time plotting evil deeds and then doing them. Isa 59:5 They spend their time and energy spinning evil plans that end up in deadly actions. Isa 59:6 They cheat and shortchange everyone. Nothing they do is productive; all their activity is filled with sin. Violence is their trademark. Isa 59:7 Their feet run to do evil, and they rush to commit

murder. They think only about sinning. Wherever they go, misery and destruction follow them. Isa 59:8 They do not know what true peace is or what it means to be just and good. They continually do wrong, and those who follow them cannot experience a moment's peace.

1. Your sins and iniquities, not someone else's, separate you from God.
2. Verses three through eight list some specific sins—murder, lying, acting violently, running toward evil, etc. Could a newborn baby have done these things?

E. Ezekiel 18:5-20.

Eze 18:5 "Suppose a certain man is just and does what is lawful and right, Eze 18:6 and he has not feasted in the mountains before Israel's idols or worshiped them. And suppose he does not commit adultery or have intercourse with a woman during her menstrual period. Eze 18:7 Suppose he is a merciful creditor, not keeping the items given in pledge by poor debtors, and does not rob the poor but instead gives food to the hungry and provides clothes for people in need. Eze 18:8 And suppose he grants loans without interest, stays away from injustice, is honest and fair when judging others, Eze 18:9 and faithfully obeys my laws and regulations. Anyone who does these things is just and will surely live, says the Sovereign LORD. Eze 18:10 "But suppose that man has a son who grows up to be a robber or murderer and refuses (i.e. he has free-will) to do what is right. Eze 18:11 And suppose that son does all the evil things his father would never do—worships idols on the mountains, commits adultery, Eze 18:12 oppresses the poor and helpless, steals from debtors by refusing to let them redeem what they have given in pledge, worships idols and takes part in loathsome practices, Eze 18:13 and lends money at interest. Should such a sinful person live? No! He must die and must take full blame (he can't take FULL BLAME if God made him to do it...God has to take PART OF THE BLAME). Eze 18:14 "But suppose that sinful son, in turn, has a son who sees his father's wickedness but decides (has free-will) against that kind of life. Eze 18:15

Suppose this son refuses (he has free-will both to do good and bad) to worship idols on the mountains, does not commit adultery, Eze 18:16 and does not exploit the poor, but instead is fair to debtors and does not rob them. And suppose this son feeds the hungry, provides clothes for the needy, Eze 18:17 helps the poor, does not lend money at interest, and obeys all my regulations and laws. Such a person will not die because of his father's sins; he will surely live. Eze 18:18 But the father will die for the many sins he committed—for being cruel and robbing close relatives, doing what was clearly wrong among his people. Eze 18:19 " 'What?' you ask. 'Doesn't the child pay for the parent's sins?' No! For if the child does what is right and keeps my laws, that child will surely live. Eze 18:20 The one who sins is the one who dies. The child will not be punished for the parent's sins, and the parent will not be punished for the child's sins. Righteous people will be rewarded for their own goodness, and wicked people will be punished for their own wickedness. Eze 18:21 But if wicked people turn away from all their sins (they have free-will to change from bad to good) and begin to obey my laws and do what is just and right, they will surely live and not die. Eze 18:22 All their past sins will be forgotten, and they will live because of the righteous things they have done. Eze 18:23 "Do you think, asks the Sovereign LORD, that I like to see wicked people die? Of course not! I only want them to turn from their wicked ways and live. Eze 18:24 However, if righteous people turn to sinful ways (they have free-will to turn from good to bad) and start acting like other sinners, should they be allowed to live? No, of course not! All their previous goodness will be forgotten, and they will die for their sins. Eze 18:25 "Yet you say, 'The Lord isn't being just!' Listen to me, O people of Israel (CALVINISTS). Am I the one who is unjust, or is it you? (YOU CALVINISTS) Eze 18:26 When righteous people (there is such a thing as RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE, not everyone is DEPRAVED like what the Calvinists are teaching contrary to the biblical declarations) turn from being good and start doing sinful things, they will die for it. Yes, they will die because of their sinful deeds. Eze 18:27 And if wicked people turn away from their wickedness, obey the law, and do what is just and right, they will save their lives (people can save their lives by turning to God for help to live a righteous life). Eze 18:28 They will live, because after thinking it over, they decided to turn from their sins. Such people will not die. Eze 18:29 And yet the people

of Israel (CALVINISTS) keep saying, 'The Lord is unjust!' O people of Israel (CALVINISTS), it is you who are unjust, not I. Eze 18:30 "Therefore, I will judge each of you, O people of Israel (CALVINISTS), according to your actions (not according to some secret decree made before the foundation of the world), says the Sovereign LORD. Turn (everyone has free-will) from your sins! Don't let them destroy you! (implying that people have the power to STOP THEMSELVES FROM GOING TO HELL) Eze 18:31 Put all your rebellion behind you, and get for yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O people of Israel (CALVINISTS)? Eze 18:32 I don't want you to die, (implying no secret decree made before the foundation of the world reprobating people) says the Sovereign LORD. Turn back and live!

1. A righteous son is not guilty of his wicked father's sins and a righteous father is not guilty of the sins of his wicked son.
2. The conclusion in verse 20 is too obvious to miss: "The soul who sins shall die."

F. Matthew 18:1-5.

Mat 18:1 About that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Which of us is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" Mat 18:2 Jesus called a small child over to him and put the child among them. Mat 18:3 Then he said, "I assure you, unless you turn from your sins and become as little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven. Mat 18:4 Therefore, anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. Mat 18:5 And anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf is welcoming me.

1. If we are to be as little children and if Total Hereditary Depravity is true, we need to be more like sinners.
2. Total Hereditary Depravity is inconsistent with the teaching of Jesus about the nature of children. If one believes the Calvinist and his denominational creeds, when Jesus demands people to become as

little children, they must be:

- a. “Wholly defiled in all the faculties of soul and body.”
- b. “By nature children of wrath.”

G. Romans 7:9-11.

Rom 7:9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. Rom 7:10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. Rom 7:11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

- 1. Rather than being born spiritually dead, the apostle Paul was born spiritually alive.
- 2. We become spiritually dead because of our own sins not sins we inherit from our ancestors.

- a. Death came to all because all sinned. (Rom. 5:12)

Rom 5:12 When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.

- b. You become “dead through your trespasses.” (Col. 2:13)

Col 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

H. 1Corinthians 14:20.

1Co 14:20 Dear brothers and sisters, don't be childish in your understanding of these things. Be innocent as babies when it comes to evil, but be mature and wise in understanding matters of this kind.

1. “In malice be babes.”
2. If babes are totally depraved, why would the apostle Paul encourage anyone to be like them?

I. 1 John 3:4.

1Jn 3:4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

1. Those who believe in inherited sin do not even understand the very nature of sin.
2. One is a sinner because he commits sin by violating the standard of conduct God has given to guide him.

Conclusion

1. The basis of Calvinism originated, not in the mind of God, but in the mind of a mistaken theologian.
2. A person becomes a sinner when he violates God’s law not when he is born.
3. We do not inherit the sin of our parents, Adam or anyone else.

Lesson Three: Unconditional Election

Introduction

1. The second doctrine of Calvinism, Unconditional Election, is based on the first, Total Hereditary Depravity.
 - a. Since, they say, mankind is totally depraved and cannot respond in faithful obedience to the invitation of Jesus—people cannot choose for themselves to obey or disobey God—then God had to choose for

mankind.

b. Unconditional Election states that God chose some to obey and some to disobey.

2. Unconditional Election is the belief that God, with no regard to the will of man, made an eternal choice of certain persons unto eternal life and some to eternal damnation and that number is so fixed that it cannot be changed.

3. Rooted in Calvin's view of the sovereignty of God, Unconditional Election is also referred to as the doctrine of predestination.

4. This lesson will examine the doctrine of Unconditional Election by:

a. Seeing how it is expressed by those denominations and individuals who promote it.

b. Defining predestination.

c. Analyzing the proof texts used to support it.

d. Citing some Scriptural objections to it.

I. Unconditional Election Expressed

A. The Westminster Confession of Faith.

"God has predestined and foreordained some men and angels to everlasting life out of His free grace and love without any foresight of faith or works in man or perseverance in either of them, and others are foreordained to everlasting death and the number of either is so certain and definite that it cannot be increased or diminished." (Chap. III, art. 3,4 &5; Chap. X, art. 2)

B. The Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.

"God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own

will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass ... By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite it cannot be either increased or diminished.” (Chap. III)

C. The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689.

“Those of mankind who are predestinated unto Life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable Purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ to everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving Him thereunto.”

D. Calvin’s Institutes.

“All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death.”

II. Predestination Defined

A. “The doctrine that the salvation or damnation of individuals has been foreordained by God; the determination beforehand of future events.” (*Webster’s Dictionary*, 1977 edition, p.289)

B. *Proorizo*.

1. This Greek word is translated three different ways in the King James Version of the Bible: “predestinated,” “ordained,” “determined before.”

2. This word is translated “foreordained” in every occurrence in the American Standard Version of the Bible.

3. “To limit or mark out beforehand; to design definitely beforehand, ordain beforehand, predestine.” (*The Analytical Greek Lexicon*, p, 345)

4. “ ... denotes to mark out beforehand, to determine before, foreordain.” (

Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 307)

5. “To define or decide beforehand.” (A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, p. 517)

C. A summary from Scripture.

1. Predestination refers to Jehovah’s creation of man and His determination beforehand of the conditions through which man might live with Him eternally.

2. It concerns the Father’s predetermination that all people who meet His conditions would live eternally in heaven and all who refuse submission to those conditions would suffer eternal damnation.

III. Proof Texts Used to Support Unconditional Election

A. Acts 4:28.

Act 4:25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? Act 4:26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. Act 4:27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, Act 4:28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

1. The argument: God purposed all things before the foundation of

the world.

2. One must ask, "What was 'determined before?'" The answer is the death of Jesus.

3. Jesus' death had been prophesied as part of God's plan to save mankind. (Luke 22:21, 22; Acts 2:22, 23)

Luk 22:21 "But here at this table, sitting among us as a friend, is the man who will betray me. Luk 22:22 For I, the Son of Man, must die since it is part of God's plan. But how terrible it will be for my betrayer!"

Act 2:22 "People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus of Nazareth by doing wonderful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know. Act 2:23 But you followed God's prearranged plan. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed him to the cross and murdered him.

4. The Jews did not realize that they were fulfilling God's plan.

a. God did not force them to kill His Son.

b. They were accountable for their actions.

B. Acts 13:48.

Act 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

1. The argument: God, before the foundation of the world, appointed only certain individuals to life.

2. This verse does not state that those who were ordained to eternal life were given it apart from their own will.

3. Belief is made a condition to eternal life. Thus, as many as had been appointed put on Christ, or met the conditions.

4. Reversing the sentence causes the true thought to be clearer:

Those who believed became part of those who had been appointed to eternal life.

C. Romans 8:28-30.

Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. **Rom 8:29** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. **Rom 8:30** Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

1. The argument: God, before the foundation of the world, predestinated certain individuals to salvation.

2. Under consideration in this passage are:

a. “Those who love God” (v. 28), not just a few who God loves.

b. “Those who are called according to His purpose.” (v. 28)

1) One is not called by a still small voice or by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit but by the gospel. (2 Thes. 2:14)

2Th 2:14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2) Those who hear, believe, and respond in obedience are referred to as being “called.” (Gal. 1:6; Heb. 9:15; 1 Pet. 2:9)

Gal 1:6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

Heb 9:15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

1Pe 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy

nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

3. This passage is a statement of God's entire purpose and its succession of events.

a. God determined to send mankind a Savior to die for all who would come to Him.

b. Then He foreordained it all before the events actually took place.

1) In that sense, God predestinated our salvation.

2) God foreordained that anyone who accepted His call would be conformed to the image of His Son. It is the conformation that is predestined, not the acceptance.

c. Those who accepted the gospel call were then justified and glorified.

D. 1 Corinthians 2:7.

1Co 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

1. The argument: The predestination of God elected certain individuals to salvation.

2. The context shows clearly that it is God's plan of redemption that was ordained (predetermined) before the ages.

3. The wisdom and power of God in reference to salvation are revealed in the gospel. (Rom. 1:16)

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

a. In times past it had been a mystery, i.e., not fully revealed. Even the prophets and princes of this world did not understand it. (Note vv. 8-

10)

1Co 2:8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 1Co 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 1Co 2:10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

b. Now it is revealed as the wisdom of God. (Eph. 3:3, 4)

Eph 3:3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Eph 3:4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

E. Ephesians 1:4,5,11.

Eph 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Eph 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Eph 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

1. The argument: Certain individuals are predestinated and others are not and that if one was not one of those predestinated, he is eternally damned and there is nothing he can do about it.

2. In reality, it is a particular group or class of people that God chose before He made the world. It is those who are "in Him," i.e., those in Christ.

a. Verse 4a. The apostle Paul and the others were part of that class which God chose before the foundation of the world. Those "in Him" (this class or group) are the predestinated ones.

b. Verse 4b. The kind of life these should live is predestinated.

- c. Verse 5. The adoption was predestinated.
 - d. Verse 11. One is an heir of eternal life because he is a part of that predestinated group.
3. A school teacher, on the first day of class, told his students that some would pass and some would fail the course they were about to take. He then described the things necessary for one to be of those who would pass. At the end of the school year, just as the teacher had said, some passed and some failed.
- a. Since the teacher predestinated the outcome before he began, did it mean that he caused each individual to either pass or fail and that there was nothing they could do about it? No.
 - b. Likewise, God predestinated before He made the world that He would choose those “in Christ” and revealed those things necessary for one to be in Him. It is therefore up to each individual to do those things necessary to be found in Christ and have salvation.

IV. Scriptural Objections to Unconditional Election

A. God has given mankind freedom of choice.

1. God gave Adam and Eve the freedom of choice. (Gen. 2:16-17)

Gen 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: Gen 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

- a. Their choice was plain—obey and live or disobey and die.
- b. Their choice was made through and by their own will having been influenced by Satan.
- c. Who is willing to say that since God foreknew the outcome that He forced or ordained Adam and Eve to sin? (James 1:13-14)

Jas 1:13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: Jas 1:14

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

2. Mankind today still has freedom of choice. (Josh. 24:15)

Jos 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

a. People can choose today whether or not they will serve God. (Rev. 22:17)

Rev 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

b. Both the Psalmist (Psa. 119:30) and Mary, the sister of Martha (Luke 10:42), are examples of this principle.

Psa 119:30 I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me.

Luk 10:42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

B. God is impartial—no respecter of persons. (2 Chron. 19:7; Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 2:11; 1 Pet. 1:17)

2Ch 19:6 and he gave them these instructions: "Always think carefully before pronouncing judgment. Remember that you do not judge to please people but to please the LORD. He will be with you when you render the verdict in each case that comes before you. **2Ch 19:7** Fear the LORD and judge with care, for the LORD our God does not tolerate perverted justice, partiality, or the taking of bribes."

Act 10:34 Then Peter replied, "I see very clearly that God doesn't show partiality. **Act 10:35** In every nation he accepts those who fear him and

do what is right.

Rom 2:11 For God does not show favoritism.

1Pe 1:17 And remember that the heavenly Father to whom you pray has no favorites when he judges. He will judge or reward you according to what you do. So you must live in reverent fear of him during your time as foreigners here on earth.

1. If Unconditional Election is true then God has indiscriminately condemned those who will be eternally damned while favoring those who are of His elect.

2. Calvinists who insist that since God is sovereign and can arbitrarily choose who to save do not realize that if God were to do that He would violate His own nature for He is also just. (Psa. 89:14)

Psa 89:14 Your throne is founded on two strong pillars—righteousness and justice. Unfailing love and truth walk before you as attendants.

3. God has not exempted anyone from the opportunity to obtain eternal life. (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).

1Ti 2:1 I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. As you make your requests, plead for God's mercy upon them, and give thanks. 1Ti 2:2 Pray this way for kings and all others who are in authority, so that we can live in peace and quietness, in godliness and dignity. 1Ti 2:3 This is good and pleases God our Savior, 1Ti 2:4 for he wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth. 1Ti 2:5 For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and people. He is the man Christ Jesus. 1Ti 2:6 He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message that God gave to the world at the proper time.

2Pe 3:9 The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise to return, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to perish, so he is giving more time for everyone to repent.

C. Salvation is not wholly dependent on God.

1. The origin of salvation is utterly dependent on Him. (Eph. 2:4-10)

Eph 2:4 But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so very much, Eph 2:5 that even while we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's special favor that you have been saved!) Eph 2:6 For he raised us from the dead along with Christ, and we are seated with him in the heavenly realms—all because we are one with Christ Jesus. Eph 2:7 And so God can always point to us as examples of the incredible wealth of his favor and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us through Christ Jesus. Eph 2:8 God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Eph 2:9 Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. Eph 2:10 For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

2. The reception of salvation is dependent on man. (Rev. 22:17; Phil. 2:12)

Rev 22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Let each one who hears them say, "Come." Let the thirsty ones come—anyone who wants to. Let them come and drink the water of life without charge.

Php 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

a. The reception of salvation comes through meeting the conditions God has provided through His grace.

b. God placed on man the responsibility of obtaining the salvation which He foreordained or predestinated.

1) God foreordained the gospel (1 Cor. 2:7-8; 2 Tim. 1:9-10) but man must obey it in order to receive the benefits of it. (1 Pet. 4:17)

1Co 2:7 No, the wisdom we speak of is the secret wisdom of God, which was hidden in former times, though he made it for our benefit before the world began. 1Co 2:8 But the rulers of this world have not understood it;

if they had, they would never have crucified our glorious Lord.

2Ti 1:9 It is God who saved us and chose us to live a holy life. He did this not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan long before the world began—to show his love and kindness to us through Christ Jesus. 2Ti 1:10 And now he has made all of this plain to us by the coming of Christ Jesus, our Savior, who broke the power of death and showed us the way to everlasting life through the Good News. 2Ti 1:11 And God chose me to be a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of this Good News.

1Pe 4:17 For the time has come for judgment, and it must begin first among God's own children. And if even we Christians must be judged, what terrible fate awaits those who have never believed God's Good News?

2) God predestinated that Christ should die for man (1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8), but man must obey Him to receive His blessings. (Heb. 5:9)

1Pe 1:20 God chose him for this purpose long before the world began, but now in these final days, he was sent to the earth for all to see. And he did this for you.

Rev 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Heb 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

3) God foreordained that redemption would be in Christ (Eph. 1:4-7) but man must do those things to be found in Him. (Gal. 3:26-27)

Eph 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Eph 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, Eph 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. Eph 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood,

the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Gal 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Gal

3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

4) The church was predestinated (Eph. 3:9-11) but one must be baptized into it to be a part of it. (1 Cor. 12:13).

Eph 3:9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: Eph 3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

1Co 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

D. God wants all persons saved. (1 Tim. 2:3,4; 2 Pet. 3:9) He has not arbitrarily doomed any individual without giving him a chance at eternal life.

1Ti 2:3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 1Ti 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

E. Unconditional Election nullifies the great commission. (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16)

Mat 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Mat 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the

Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Mat 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Mar 16:15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Mar 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

- 1. Nothing could be more foolish than to preach the gospel to all if only people whom God arbitrarily chooses are able to understand it.**
- 2. If nothing can change anyone's status in relation to salvation or condemnation, why preach it? Why warn people to flee from the wrath to come? (Matt. 3:7)**

Mat 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

- a. If they are elect, they will not incur the wrath of God regardless of what they do or do not do.**
- b. If they are not elect, they cannot flee anyway.**

F. Unconditional Election nullifies the universal invitation of Christ. (Matt. 11:28-30; Rev. 22:17)

Mat 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Mat 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Mat 11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Rev 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Why would Jesus plead with people to do the impossible?

Conclusion

1. The Bible does teach predestination but not the Unconditional Election that Calvinists teach.

a. It does not teach that individuals have been foreordained to life or death no matter what they do.

b. It states that we are free moral agents with the ability to accept or reject God's commandments thus determining whether we will ultimately be saved or lost.

2. The predestination or foreordination of God determined that He would save sinful man through the sacrifice of His Son.

a. Those who would respond to the gospel, His power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16), and its call (2 Thes. 2:14) would become part of His elect. Those who reject the gospel and its message would be damned eternally.

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

2Th 2:14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

b. God will render judgment on all in the final day based on what they have done. The righteous will have life. The wicked will face the second death. Each person, not the predestination of God, determines what his/her destiny will be. (Rom. 2:3-11)

Rom 2:3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Rom 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? Rom 2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of

wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Rom 2:6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds: Rom 2:7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: Rom 2:8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Rom 2:9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; Rom 2:10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: Rom 2:11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

Lesson Four: Limited Atonement

Introduction

1. The third basic tenet of Calvinism is that Christ died only for the ones God had unconditionally chosen to save.
2. The doctrine of Limited Atonement is a natural outgrowth of the doctrine of Unconditional Election coupled with the idea that everything God does has purpose. (See Isaiah 55:11)

Isa 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

- a. Calvinists rationalize that God would not waste the sacrifice of Christ on those whom He had determined not to save.
 - b. They believe that since God chose only some to be saved, it would be foolish to think that He sent His Son to shed His atoning blood for the sins of all people.
 - c. Their conclusion: Christ only died for the elect.
3. The procedure of this lesson will be similar to those which preceded it. We will look at this doctrine by:

- a. Seeing how its proponents express it.
- b. Examining the proof texts used to support it.
- c. Citing Scriptural objections to it.

I. Limited Atonement Expressed

A. David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas.

“Christ’s redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them. His death was a substitutionary sacrifice of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners. In addition to putting away the sins of His people,

Christ’s redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation, including faith, which united them to Him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, thereby guaranteeing their salvation.” (*The Five Points of Calvinism, Defined, Defended, Documented*, p. 17)

B. The Westminster Shorter Catechism.

“ Ques. 17. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?

“ Ans. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

“ Ques. 18. Wherin consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?

“ Ans. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam’s first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

“ Ques. 19. What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?

“ Ans. All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

“ Ques. 20. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

“ Ans. God, having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.

“ Ques. 21. Who is the Redeemer of God’s elect?

“ Ans. The only Redeemer of God’s elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, ...” (*The Westminster Shorter Catechism, via. The Protestant Faith, p. 280*)

II. Proof Texts Used to Support Limited Atonement

A. John 10:15.

Joh 10:15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

1. The argument: Jesus died only for His sheep which Calvinists take to mean the elect.

2. The answer.

a. In verse 16 Jesus taught that there are “other sheep I have which are not of this fold” who would come into the fold.

Joh 10:16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

b. Calvinists deny that one can change from “sheep.. not of this fold” into “sheep” of the fold or from “goats” to “sheep.” (See Matthew 25:31-46)

Mat 25:31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: **Mat 25:32** And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: **Mat 25:33** And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. **Mat 25:34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: **Mat 25:35** For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: **Mat 25:36** Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. **Mat 25:37** Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? **Mat 25:38** When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? **Mat 25:39** Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? **Mat 25:40** And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. **Mat 25:41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: **Mat 25:42** For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: **Mat 25:43** I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. **Mat 25:44** Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? **Mat 25:45** Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. **Mat 25:46** And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

3. Examples of those who had changed from “goats” to “sheep.”

a. The Corinthians. (1 Cor. 6:9-11)

1Co 6:9 Don't you know that those who do wrong will have no share in the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, who are idol worshipers, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexuals,

1Co 6:10 thieves, greedy people, drunkards, abusers, and swindlers—none of these will have a share in the Kingdom of God. **1Co 6:11** There was a time when some of you were just like that, but now your sins have been washed away, and you have been set apart for God. You have been made right with God because of what the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God have done for you.

b. The apostle Paul. (1 Tim. 1:13-14)

1Ti 1:13 even though I used to scoff at the name of Christ. I hunted down his people, harming them in every way I could. But God had mercy on me because I did it in ignorance and unbelief. **1Ti 1:14** Oh, how kind and gracious the Lord was! He filled me completely with faith and the love of Christ Jesus.

B. Acts 20:28 and Ephesians 5:25

Act 20:28 "And now beware! Be sure that you feed and shepherd God's flock—his church, purchased with his blood—over whom the Holy Spirit has appointed you as elders.

Eph 5:25 And you husbands must love your wives with the same love Christ showed the church. He gave up his life for her

1. The argument: Christ died only for those who are saved, the elect.

2. The answer.

a. There is no doubt that the church is composed of the saved and that Jesus died to purchase the church.

b. The Scriptural truth that Calvinists overlook, though, is that any person can become a part of that church. (Rev. 22:17)

Rev 22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Let each one who hears them say, "Come." Let the thirsty ones come—anyone who wants to. Let them come and drink the water of life without charge.

3. The church consists of:

- a. All who obey Jesus (Heb. 5:8-9). It is not limited to just those who Calvinists say are elected to salvation.**

Heb 5:8 So even though Jesus was God's Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered. **Heb 5:9** In this way, God qualified him as a perfect High Priest, and he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey him.

- b. Those who do the will of the Father. (Matt. 7:21)**

Mat 7:21 "Not all people who sound religious are really godly. They may refer to me as 'Lord,' but they still won't enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The decisive issue is whether they obey my Father in heaven.

- c. All who are saved (Acts 2:47). Though not all will be saved, those who "gladly receive" the word are added by the Lord to His church. (Acts 2:41,47)**

Act 2:47 all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.

Act 2:41 Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church—about three thousand in all.

C. Romans 9:13.

Rom 9:13 In the words of the Scriptures, "I loved Jacob, but I rejected Esau."

1. The argument.

- a. The love of God in giving Jesus as a sacrifice was not a general kindness to all creation.**

- b. "But it is a special and discriminating love, the favor which he bears to His own people, as distinct from others." (John Gill, *Five Points of Calvinism*)**

2. The answer.

a. “Special and discriminating love” sounds quite different than the Biblical teaching that “there is no partiality with God.” (Rom. 2:11)

Rom 2:11 For God does not show favoritism.

b. Romans 9:13 simply shows the righteousness of God—that God was not unrighteous in His selection of Jacob to be an ancestor of the Messiah.

Rom 9:13 In the words of the Scriptures, "I loved Jacob, but I rejected Esau."

c. Admittedly, this passage shows that God preferred Jacob over Esau even before their birth— not in reference to their salvation but in regards to the election of the descendants of Jacob as the people through whom the physical Messiah would come.

d. “ ... Jacob and Esau were full brothers; and though they were twins, Esau the first-born was the natural heir of the promise. Yet of the two, God selected Jacob, even before they were born, and therefore before they had done anything good or bad, ‘that the purpose of God according to election might stand.’ The purpose inhered in the promise. God was selecting his own instruments to work out his own plans.

“In choosing Jacob, God chose his descendants; and every Jew gloried in that choice. But the selection of Jacob and the rejection of Esau had nothing to do with their salvation. If it had pertained to their salvation, there would have been no point in mentioning the fact that the younger was selected instead of the older; for even the most dogmatic predestinarian would not say that the oldest son is the natural heir of salvation and all the other sons reprobates. The fact is that the selection of Jacob was the selection of a people rather than an individual. Had it been the election to salvation, then the nations descending from Jacob were all elected to salvation, and Esau’s descendants were all lost” (Robertson L. Whiteside, *A New Commentary on Paul Letter to the Saints at Rome*, p. 199).

III. Scriptural Objections to Limited Atonement

A. The gospel is for all. (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16)

Mat 28:18 Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. **Mat 28:19** Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Mat 28:20** Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Mar 16:15 And then he told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere. **Mar 16:16** Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned.

- 1. While Calvinists rationalize that God would not waste Christ's sacrifice on those whom He had determined not to save, they do not seem to realize the waste that occurs by Calvinist preachers who preach the gospel to all people including those so totally depraved that they cannot understand it.**
- 2. Consider also the waste of preaching the gospel to those God will save whether they hear it or not.**

B. Jesus died for all people.

- 1. Luke 19:10. "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."**
- 2. John 12:32. "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself."**
- 3. Romans 5:18. "Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life."**

4. 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15. "For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again."

5. 1 Timothy 2:5, 6. "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all..."

6. 1 Timothy 4:10. "For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe."

7. Hebrews 2:9. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone."

C. The blood of Christ can wash away anyone's sins.

1. 1 John 2:1, 2. "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."

- Propitiation. "2. hilasmos ^2434^, akin to hileos ('merciful, propitious'), signifies 'an expiation, a means whereby sin is covered and remitted.' It is used in the NT of Christ Himself as 'the propitiation,' in <1 John 2:2> and <4:10>, signifying that He Himself, through the expiatory sacrifice of His death, is the personal means by whom God shows mercy to the sinner who believes on Christ as the One thus provided. In the former passage He is described as 'the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.' The italicized addition in the KJV, 'the sins of,' gives a wrong interpretation. What is indicated is that provision is made for the whole world, so that no one is, by divine predetermination, excluded from the scope of God's mercy; the efficacy of the 'propitiation,' however, is made actual for those who believe. In <4:10>, the fact that God 'sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins,' is shown to be the great expression of

God's love toward man, and the reason why Christians should love one another.# In the Sept., <Lev. 25:9; Num. 5:8; 1 Chr. 28:20; Ps. 130:4; Ezek. 44:27; Amos 8:14>.#” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985)

2. John 1:29. “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’”

Conclusion

1. It would be extremely difficult for us to devise a doctrine which would be more out of harmony with plain Biblical teaching than the doctrine of Limited Atonement.

2. The doctrine of Limited Atonement stands in direct opposition to:

a. The death of Jesus for all. (John 12:32)

Joh 12:32 And when I am lifted up on the cross, I will draw everyone to myself."

b. The Father’s desire for all to be saved. (1 Tim. 2:4).

1Ti 2:4 for he wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth.

Lesson Five: Irresistible Grace

Introduction

1. The fourth basic doctrine of Calvinism is Irresistible Grace. It is also called Efficacious Grace or Invincible Grace.

2. Irresistible Grace is the idea that the elect, those who Calvinists believe have been unconditionally elected to eternal life, cannot resist the grace of God and heaven’s determination to save them.

a. As those elected to damnation can do nothing about it, those who are elected to salvation can do nothing to resist.

b. The grace of God overwhelms them in such a way that even if they wanted to they could not repel it.

3. Calvin believed that only a direct operation of the Holy Spirit could make one who is “dead in sin” hear the gospel and believe.

a. This means that the gospel would not be sufficient to convict and convert the heart of the sinner.

b. Calvinists say the Lord, through the Spirit, must appear to the sinner in a direct, miraculous way in order to bring about the sinner’s conversion. And if the sinner is one whom God had predestinated to life before the foundation of the world, that sinner must submit to God’s grace as revealed to him by the Spirit.

4. We will examine this fourth tenet of Calvinism, Irresistible Grace, in much the same way we have considered the previous three. We will:

a. See how Calvinists themselves express this doctrine.

b. Consider the proof texts used to support it.

c. Offer some Scriptural objections to it.

I. Irresistible Grace Expressed

A. The Westminster Confession of Faith.

“All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace” (Chap. X, Sect. 1).

B. David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas.

“The *gospel invitation extends a call* to salvation to every one who hears its message. It invites all men without distinction to drink freely of the water of life and live. It promises salvation to all who repent and believe. But this outward general call, extended to the elect and non-elect alike, will not bring sinners to Christ. Why? Because men are by nature dead in sin and are under its power. They are of themselves unable and

unwilling to forsake their evil ways and to turn to Christ for mercy. Consequently, the unregenerate will not respond to the gospel call to repentance and faith. No amount of external threatenings or promises will cause blind, deaf, dead, rebellious sinners to bow before Christ as Lord and to look to Him alone for salvation. Such an act of faith and submission is contrary to the lost man’s nature.

“Therefore, the *Holy Spirit*, in order to bring God’s elect to salvation, extends to them a *special inward call* in addition to the outward call contained in the gospel message. Through this special call the Holy Spirit performs a work of grace within the sinner which inevitably brings him to faith in Christ...

“Although the general outward call of the gospel can be, and often is, rejected, the special inward call of the Spirit never fails to result in the conversion of those to whom it is made. This special call is not made to all sinners but is issued to the elect only! The Spirit is in no way dependent upon their help or cooperation for success in His work of bringing them to Christ. It is for this reason that Calvinists speak of the Spirit’s call and of God’s grace in saving sinners as being ‘efficacious,’ ‘invincible,’ or ‘irresistible.’ For the grace which the Holy Spirit extends to the elect cannot be thwarted or refused, it never fails to bring them to true faith in Christ!” (David N. Steele, Curtis C. Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49).

II. Proof Texts Used to Support Irresistible Grace

A. Acts 16:14.

Act 16:13 On the Sabbath we went a little way outside the city to a riverbank, where we supposed that some people met for prayer, and we sat down to speak with some women who had come together. Act 16:14 One of them was Lydia from Thyatira, a merchant of expensive purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. As she listened to us, the Lord opened her heart, and she accepted what Paul was saying.

1. The argument: God opened Lydia's heart to receive the word. She then heard it and was saved.

2. The answer.

a. Calvinists have things out of order.

b. The proper order:

1) Lydia began as a worshiper of God. (w. 13,14)

2) After she heard Paul, Silas and Timothy preaching, her heart was then opened, (v. 14)

3) She responded and obeyed the Lord. (v. 15)

Act 16:15 She was baptized along with other members of her household, and she asked us to be her guests. "If you agree that I am faithful to the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my home." And she urged us until we did.

3. It is interesting to note that Calvinists will use this passage as a proof text for Irresistible Grace but exclude reference to Lydia's baptism.

B. Romans 8:7.

Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

1. The argument: The "carnal mind," possessed by those who are depraved, cannot understand, believe or obey the spiritual law of God.

2. The answer: Consider the verse in context—verses 1-8.

Rom 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. **Rom 8:2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. **Rom 8:3** For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: **Rom 8:4** That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. **Rom 8:5** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. **Rom 8:6** For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. **Rom 8:7** Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. **Rom 8:8** So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

a. Seen in the context is the free agency of man in choosing whether to obey or disobey God.

b. In reality, the passage is teaching a simple principle.

1) Those who are spiritually minded, those who have an interest in spiritual things, will be obedient to the commands of God

2) Those who are carnally minded, those who possess no interest in spiritual matters, will be disobedient.

3. God does not force anyone to accept or reject His will.

a. Calvinism simply views people as automatons (“a machine or control mechanism designed to follow automatically a predetermined sequence of operations or respond to encoded instructions” [*Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, p. 60]) with no will of their own.

b. While Calvinists teach that since a person is born totally depraved, he cannot even desire to do good, they say that if he is one of those who have been given unconditional election by God, that when God calls him, he cannot do anything to resist.

III. Scriptural Objections to Irresistible Grace

A. Irresistible Grace contradicts the Scriptural principle of free agency.

1. This tenet of Calvinism declares that the grace of God cannot be rejected.

2. In contrast, the Bible plainly teaches that ones salvation is conditional upon his obedience— that one can either reject or accept salvation as it is offered through Jesus Christ.

a. The grace of God has appeared to all people (Titus 2:11) and yet millions have rejected it.

Tit 2:11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

b. Each person is accountable for his response to the gospel. (John 12:47-48)

Joh 12:47 And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. Joh 12:48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

c. Those who reject the teachings of Jesus are held responsible. (John 5:24; 8:24)

Joh 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Joh 8:24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

3. The Bible states that each individual is free to choose whether or not to take advantage of the grace of God. It clearly demonstrates one may resist God's grace as revealed in His word.

B. Irresistible Grace mistakenly portrays how people are called by God to salvation.

1. All people are called by the gospel. (2 Thes. 2:14)

2Th 2:14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The Bible does not say that people are called by some still, small voice or by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit on them.

3. The Holy Spirit in the conviction and conversion of the sinner does not work apart from the word. (Rom. 1:16)

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

C. Irresistible Grace changes the order of belief and salvation.

1. "A man is not saved because he believes in Christ; he believes in Christ because he is saved." (Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*)

2. In the Bible, salvation always follows belief, i.e., faith always precedes salvation.

a. John 3:16. Belief then salvation.

Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

b. Acts 16:31. Belief then salvation.

Act 16:31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

c. Mark 16:16. Belief, baptism, then salvation.

Mar 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

d. Hebrews 11:6. One cannot be saved without faith, thus making it a condition of salvation and causing it to have to precede the salvation of one's soul.

Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

D. Irresistible Grace has an erroneous view as to when one is made alive spiritually.

1. "Therefore, the *Holy Spirit*, in order to bring God's elect to salvation, extends to them a *special inward call* in addition to the outward call contained in the gospel message. Through this special call the Holy Spirit performs a work of grace within the sinner which inevitably brings him to faith in Christ. The inward change wrought in the elect sinner enables him to understand and believe spiritual truth; in the spiritual realm he is given the seeing eye and the hearing ear. The Spirit creates within him a new heart or a new nature. This is accomplished through regeneration or the new birth by which the sinner is made a child of God and is given spiritual life. His will is renewed through this process so that the sinner spontaneously comes to Christ of his own free choice. Because he is given a new nature so that he loves righteousness, and because his mind is enlightened so that he understands and believes the Biblical gospel, the renewed sinner freely and willingly turns to Christ as Lord and Saviour. Thus the once dead sinner is drawn to Christ by the inward supernatural call of the Spirit who through regeneration makes him alive and creates within him faith and repentance" (Steele and Thomas, *ibid.*).

2. The Bible teaches that one is made alive when, after hearing the gospel, he is baptized (Col. 2:12,13; cf. John 3:3-5).

Col 2:12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the

dead. Col 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

Joh 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Joh 3:4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Joh 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Conclusion

1. The Scriptures reveal we are saved by the grace of God. (Eph. 2:8)

Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

2. However, using our freedom to choose, we accept this grace by our faith not because God forces us to accept it. (Rev. 22:17)

Rev 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Lesson Six: Perseverance of the Saints

Introduction

1. The fifth and final tenet of Calvinism, Perseverance of the Saints, is also referred to as the doctrine of “once saved always saved;” “the impossibility of apostasy;” “the security of the believer;” and “once in grace always in grace.”
2. This doctrine results from the tenets which precede it.
 - a. “This doctrine does not stand alone but is a necessary part of the

Calvinistic system of theology. The doctrines of Election and Efficacious Grace logically imply the certain salvation of those who receive these blessings. If God has chosen men absolutely and unconditionally to eternal life, and if His Spirit effectively applies to them the benefits of redemption, the inescapable conclusion is that these persons shall be saved.” (Lorraine Boettner, op. cit., p. 182)

b. The “logic” of Calvinism.

1) Since man is totally hereditarily depraved and can do nothing on his own but evil, unconditional election is required to save him.

2) God must then call him in an irresistible way to salvation.

3) Therefore, since he needs to do nothing to be saved, he needs to do nothing to remain saved.

4) Anything he would do in any way that would affect his salvation would negate the miraculous work of God in saving him.

3. This lesson will examine the doctrine of Perseverance of the Saints by:

a. Seeing how its proponents express it.

b. Defining what Calvinists mean by “imputation.”

c. Considering the proof texts used to support it.

d. Offering some Scriptural objections to it.

I. Perseverance of the Saints Expressed

A. The Westminster Confession of Faith.

“They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace: but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

“This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ, the abiding of the Spirit and of the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which ariseth, also, the certainty and infallibility thereof.”
(Chap. XIX, Sect. 1)

B. David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas.

“The elect are not only redeemed by Christ and renewed by the Spirit; they are also *kept* in faith by the almighty power of God. All those who are spiritually united to Christ through regeneration are eternally secure in Him. Nothing can separate them from the eternal and unchangeable love of God. They have been predestinated unto eternal glory and are therefore assured of heaven.

“The doctrine of perseverance of the saints does not maintain that all who *profess* the Christian faith are certain of heaven. It is *saints*—those who are set apart by the Spirit—who *persevere* to the end. It is *believers*—those who are given true, living faith in Christ—who are *secure* and safe in Him. Many who profess to believe fall away, but they do not fall from grace for they were never in grace. True believers do fall into temptations, and they do commit grievous sins, but these sins do not cause them to lose their salvation or separate them from Christ.”
(Steele and Thomas, op. cit., p. 56)

C. Sam Morris, a Baptist preacher.

“All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit, from idolatry to murder, will not make his soul in any more danger. ... The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with

the salvation of his soul.” (*Do a Christian’s Sins Damn His Soul?*)

II. The Calvinistic Doctrine of Imputation

A. The doctrine of Perseverance of the Saints is based upon the false assumption that the elect sinner is clothed in the personal righteousness of Jesus Christ.

1. Therefore, when God looks at him, He does not see the sins of the elect one, rather He sees the perfection of Jesus.

2. Thus, one does not have to be concerned with doing righteousness if he is one whom God has elected to save.

B. To impute is “to credit to a person or a cause ... to credit by transferral.” (*Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, p. 421).

1. Calvinists believe the guilt of Adam’s sin was imputed to the whole human race—that all are sinners by virtue of the fact that being descendants of Adam they inherited the guilt of his sin.

2. The remedy Calvinists offer for imputed sin is a second imputation.

a. The perfect life of Christ is imputed to the elect sinner.

b. God, in viewing that individual, only sees the personal righteousness of Jesus, not the sins of the sinner.

c. This allows the elect one to continue to sin because Christ lived a sinless life in his stead and the innocence of Christ now clothes him.

1) He is relieved of any responsibility for living a godly life.

2) He does not even have to correct his wrongs because he will not be judged by his own actions but by the perfect life Jesus lived.

C. John Calvin on imputation.

“ ... I answer, that the grace which they call accepting, is nothing else than the free goodness with which the Father embraces us in Christ when he clothes us with the innocence of Christ, and accepts it as ours, so that in consideration of it he regards us as holy, pure and innocent. For the righteousness of Christ (as it alone is perfect, so it alone can stand the scrutiny of God) must be sisted for us, and as a surety represent us judicially. ... Our imperfection and purity, covered with this purity, are not imputed, but are as it were buried, so as not to come under judgment until the hour arrive when the old man being destroyed, and plainly extinguished in us, the divine goodness shall receive us into beatific peace with the new Adam, there to await the day of the Lord, on which, being clothed with incorruptible bodies, we shall be translated to the glory of the heavenly kingdom.” (Calvin, op. cit., Book IE, p. 82).

D. The word “impute” is found some 7 times in the King James Version of the New Testament. (Rom. 4:6, 8, 11, 22, 23, 24; 2 Cor. 5:19; Gal. 3:6).

Rom 4:6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

Rom 4:8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

Rom 4:11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

Rom 4:22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Rom 4:23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; Rom 4:24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

2Co 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Gal 3:6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for

righteousness.

- 1. Not a one of these passages teaches that Christ's personal righteousness ever becomes the righteousness of another.**
- 2. None of these verses states that God imputes Christ's righteousness to anyone.**

E. The Bible clearly states that one who is considered righteous by heaven is one who practices righteousness (1 John 3:7), not the one who has had the personal righteousness of Jesus imputed to him.

1Jn 3:7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

- 1. A sinner becomes righteous by pardon made possible by the atoning death of Jesus, not by imputation of His perfect life. (Matt. 26:28; Rom. 5:8-9)**

Mat 26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Rom 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Rom 5:9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

- 2. The atoning death of Jesus provides for the sinner's pardon if he will face up to his responsibility to repent and then obey God's law of pardon, (cf. Acts 2:38; 1 John 1:7-9).**

Act 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

1Jn 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 1Jn 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we

deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 1Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

III. Proof Texts Used to Support the Perseverance of the Saints

A. John 3:16, 36 and 5:24.

Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Joh 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Joh 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

1. The argument: The believer, the saved, has (present possession) eternal life. Since eternal means “unending,” if the Christian could be lost he could not possess eternal life. Therefore, since the Christian has eternal life, he can never lose it.

2. The answer.

a. Eternal life is used in two senses in the Scriptures.

1) The life Christians now possess. (1 John 5:11-13).

1Jn 5:11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. **1Jn 5:12** He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. **1Jn 5:13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

2) Something for which the Christian hopes (Titus 1:2) and will receive “in the age to come.” (Mark 10:29-30)

Tit 1:2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

Mar 10:29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, Mar 10:30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

b. The eternal life Christians now possess would not be altered if they lose it.

1) It is the life that is eternal, not the possession of it.

2) The fact that one may leave it behind does not alter its intrinsic nature.

c. Possession of eternal life is conditional upon walking with God in accordance with His will.

B. John 10:28-29.

Joh 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. Joh 10:29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

1. The argument: No one can snatch any of Christ's sheep from out of the Father's hand. Therefore, no one who has been saved can ever be lost.

2. The answer.

a. It is true that no one is able to pluck the saved out of the hand of God unless the person is willing to go.

1) Becoming a “sheep” and being placed in the hand of God is conditional. It takes hearing Christ (v. 27), believing Christ (v. 26) and following Christ, (v. 27)

Joh 10:26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. Joh 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

2) Remaining a “sheep” is likewise conditional. As long as a person remains a faithful follower of Christ he “shall never perish” (v. 28) but remember, a sheep can go astray.

b. When a person places himself in God’s care and humbly submits to His will, no other person or being can tear him from this position. But this passage does not teach that he is not able to remove himself from the hand of God by sinning (cf. Isa. 59:1-2).

Isa 59:1 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: Isa 59:2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

C. Romans 8:35-39.

Rom 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Rom 8:36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Rom 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Rom 8:38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Rom 8:39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1. The argument: Nothing can separate the elect from the love of God. Therefore, if they cannot be separated from the love of God, they can never be lost.

2. The answer.

a. It is true that all the things named in this passage cannot separate one from the love of Christ, but both the Father and the Son love all persons (John 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:14).

Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

2Co 5:14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

1) Are all people going to be saved?

2) Even Calvinists do not believe that.

b. The passage is not speaking of the love Christ has for us but of the love we have for Him. (cf. v. 28)

Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

c. R. L. Whiteside, commenting on this passage in *A New Commentary on Paul Letter to the Saints at Rome*, said:

“The phrase, ‘the love of Christ,’ can mean either the love Christ has for us or the love we have for him. Here it evidently means the love we have for him, for no one would think that the harsh things we suffer for him would separate his love from us; whereas it might appear reasonable to some that the sufferings we undergo in serving Christ might cause our love to grow cold, and even vanish. It will be noticed that all the evils mentioned are things that come upon us—things from without. If a man loves Christ as he should, none of the things mentioned will destroy that love; only the conditions of our own heart can cause us to cease loving him.... “It will be noticed that all the things mentioned are things without. Nothing here is said as to what corrupting influence might do to the heart.

No powers or persecutions can force one to quit loving God. If he quits,

he does it of his own accord. Love cannot be destroyed by force or by imperial command but it may wax cold. Some even depart from their first love (Rev. 2:4). Paul recognized that people might depart from the faith, but he was persuaded that no evils coming on us from without could destroy the love of God. In Christ, God's love for us and our love for him meet." (pp. 192,193)

Rev 2:4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

c. This passage does not teach that people cannot be separated from the salvation which is in Christ.

D. 1 John 3:6-9.

1Jn 3:6 So if we continue to live in him, we won't sin either. But those who keep on sinning have never known him or understood who he is.

1Jn 3:7 Dear children, don't let anyone deceive you about this: When people do what is right, it is because they are righteous, even as Christ is righteous. 1Jn 3:8 But when people keep on sinning, it shows they belong to the Devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy these works of the Devil. 1Jn 3:9 Those who have been born into God's family do not sin, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they have been born of God.

1. The argument: One who is born of God cannot sin, i.e., it is impossible for the child of God to sin. If he cannot sin, he cannot be lost. Once he is saved he is always saved.

2. The answer.

a. "Cannot," from the Greek *ou-dunamal*, means morally unable not that which is physically impossible.

b. "Cannot," as used in Scripture, does not always mean impossible.

1) The example of Balaam in Numbers 22:18: "Though Balak were to

give me his house full of gold, I could not go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more.” Balaam did not mean it was impossible for him to go beyond the word of God. Rather, he meant that he could not do it and be pleasing to God. He was forbidden to do it.

2) “And so the word in our verse does not mean that the child of God has come to the place where he is physically unable to do any wrong, but that he is morally restrained from it, just as a good man who is asked to join another in some crime would reply, ‘O, no, I couldn’t do anything like that.’” (E.M. Zerr, *Bible Commentary*, Vol. Six, p. 284)

c. John, in this passage, could not have meant that it was impossible for a child of God to sin.

1) In 1:8-10 and 2:1-2 of this same epistle he plainly stated that he could.

1Jn 1:8 If we say we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth. 1Jn 1:9 But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong. 1Jn 1:10 If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.

1Jn 2:1 My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if you do sin, there is someone to plead for you before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who pleases God completely. 1Jn 2:2 He is the sacrifice for our sins. He takes away not only our sins but the sins of all the world.

2) In commenting on verses six and nine, Marvin Vincent said, “John does not teach that believers do not sin, but is speaking of a *character*, a *habit*. Throughout the Epistle he deals with the *ideal reality* of life in God, in which the love of God and sin exclude each other as light and darkness.” (*Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol. II, p. 348)

IV. Scriptural Objections to Perseverance of the

Saints

A. Matthew 13:41, 42. All who are in Christ's kingdom have been born again (John 3:3-5) but some of those in the kingdom who "practice lawlessness" will be gathered out of it.

Mat 13:41 I, the Son of Man, will send my angels, and they will remove from my Kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil, Mat 13:42 and they will throw them into the furnace and burn them. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Joh 3:3 Jesus replied, "I assure you, unless you are born again, you can never see the Kingdom of God." Joh 3:4 "What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?" Joh 3:5 Jesus replied, "The truth is, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit.

B. John 15:1-6.

Joh 15:1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. Joh 15:2 He cuts off every branch that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. Joh 15:3 You have already been pruned for greater fruitfulness by the message I have given you. Joh 15:4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful apart from me. Joh 15:5 "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. Joh 15:6 Anyone who parts from me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned.

- 1. In these verses Jesus warns His disciples to continue to abide in Him.**
- 2. If it is impossible for a Christian not to abide in Christ, then Jesus' warning has no meaning.**
- 3. A Christian who does not repent of failing to abide in Christ can**

only anticipate destruction in the final day.

C. Acts 8:9-24.

Act 8:9 A man named Simon had been a sorcerer there for many years, claiming to be someone great. Act 8:10 The Samaritan people, from the least to the greatest, often spoke of him as "the Great One—the Power of God." Act 8:11 He was very influential because of the magic he performed. Act 8:12 But now the people believed Philip's message of Good News concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. As a result, many men and women were baptized. Act 8:13 Then Simon himself believed and was baptized. He began following Philip wherever he went, and he was amazed by the great miracles and signs Philip performed. Act 8:14 When the apostles back in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had accepted God's message, they sent Peter and John there. Act 8:15 As soon as they arrived, they prayed for these new Christians to receive the Holy Spirit. Act 8:16 The Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them, for they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Act 8:17 Then Peter and John laid their hands upon these believers, and they received the Holy Spirit. Act 8:18 When Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given when the apostles placed their hands upon people's heads, he offered money to buy this power. Act 8:19 "Let me have this power, too," he exclaimed, "so that when I lay my hands on people, they will receive the Holy Spirit!" Act 8:20 But Peter replied, "May your money perish with you for thinking God's gift can be bought! Act 8:21 You can have no part in this, for your heart is not right before God. Act 8:22 Turn from your wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive your evil thoughts, Act 8:23 for I can see that you are full of bitterness and held captive by sin." Act 8:24 "Pray to the Lord for me," Simon exclaimed, "that these terrible things won't happen to me!"

1. Simon believed and was baptized, (v. 3) Thus there is no question he was a child of God.

2. After becoming a child of God he sought to buy the gift of God with

money, (vv. 18-19)

a. He was told he was “poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.” (v. 23)

b. He was commanded to “repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart can be forgiven you.” (v. 22)

3. One inspired man, Luke, called Simon a baptized believer. Another inspired man, Peter, told him he would perish with his money.

a. Simon, though a child of God, had sins that needed to be forgiven or he would perish, (v. 20)

b. Simon had fallen from grace.

D. Romans 8:12, 13.

Rom 8:12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. Rom 8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

1. This passage is directed toward “brethren.” (v. 12)

2. It is possible for a brother, a child of God, to live according to the flesh and “die.” (v. 13).

E. Romans 11:22.

Rom 11:22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

1. This text is a warning to Gentile Christians who were in God’s “goodness.”

2. If they failed to continue in God’s goodness, they would be “cut off.”

F. Romans 14:15 and 1 Corinthians 8:11.

Rom 14:15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

1Co 8:11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?

- 1. Both of these passages warn Christians not to cause their brethren to sin in matters of judgment.**
- 2. Those “for whom Christ died,” Calvinists would call them the elect, can be destroyed (Rom. 14:15) or perish. (1 Cor. 8:11)**

G. 1 Corinthians 9:27.

1Co 9:27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

- 1. Not even the staunchest Calvinist would deny that the apostle Paul was a child of God.**
- 2. Yet, in this text, Paul said, that even after preaching to others, he could be “disqualified,” i.e., he could be lost even though he was a Christian.**

H. Galatians 5:2-4.

Gal 5:2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. Gal 5:3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Gal 5:4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

- 1. This passage is definitely directed toward Christians (cf. Gal. 3:26), children of God.**

Gal 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

2. The word translated “fallen” in this text is the same word that is used in other places to refer to divorce.

a. It could be translated “severed.”

b. These children of God were once as firmly united with the grace of God as a man is with his wife or as Christ is with the church.

c. But now they have been divorced, severed, from grace.

1) They could not be severed from something they were not joined to in the first place.

2) They could not fall from that which they were not in.

I. 1 Timothy 4:1.

1Ti 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

1. This passage states that some Christians “will depart from the faith.”

2. Such a departure would cause them to be lost.

3. In verse 16, Timothy is told if he, as a child of God, would be saved he would have to “continue in” the doctrine of Christ.

1Ti 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

J. Hebrews 6:4-6.

Heb 6:4 For it is impossible to restore to repentance those who were once enlightened—those who have experienced the good things of

heaven and shared in the Holy Spirit, Heb 6:5 who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the power of the age to come— Heb 6:6 and who then turn away from God. It is impossible to bring such people to repentance again because they are nailing the Son of God to the cross again by rejecting him, holding him up to public shame.

1. The people under consideration in this passage:

- a. Were “once enlightened.” Even Calvinists believe this phrase applies to the Christian and not to one who is totally depraved and wholly defiled.
- b. “Tasted the heavenly gift.” They must have been Christians for unregenerates, those totally depraved, could not experience the heavenly gift.
- c. Were “partakers of the Holy Spirit.” Since the word “partakers” has its root idea in fellowship, can one who is not a Christian be in fellowship with the Holy Spirit?
- d. “Tasted the good word of God.” An unregenerate person, according to Calvinists, could not possibly understand the word of God.
- e. “Tasted ... the powers of the age to come.” Again, the unregenerate could have no connection to the powers and blessings of God through Christ.
- f. Are obviously Christians, children of God.

2. Not only could these children of God fall away, they could fall so far away that it would be impossible to renew them to repentance.

K. Hebrews 10:26-29.

Heb 10:26 Dear friends, if we deliberately continue sinning after we have received a full knowledge of the truth, there is no other sacrifice that will cover these sins. Heb 10:27 There will be nothing to look forward to but the terrible expectation of God's judgment and the raging fire that will consume his enemies. Heb 10:28 Anyone who refused to obey the law of

Moses was put to death without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Heb 10:29 Think how much more terrible the punishment will be for those who have trampled on the Son of God and have treated the blood of the covenant as if it were common and unholy. Such people have insulted and enraged the Holy Spirit who brings God's mercy to his people.

- 1. It is evident that Christians are under consideration in this passage because they have been “sanctified” by the blood of Christ, (v. 29)**
- 2. If a child of God willfully forsakes the Lord and does not repent, he has nothing to anticipate but a “certain fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation.” (v. 27)**

L. James 5:19. A brother can “wander from the truth” in such a manner as to be a “sinner” whose soul is in jeopardy of “death.” (cf. Gal. 6:1)

Jas 5:19 My dear brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders away from the truth and is brought back again, Jas 5:20 you can be sure that the one who brings that person back will save that sinner from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins.

Gal 6:1 Dear brothers and sisters, if another Christian is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself.

M. 2 Peter 2:1.

2Pe 2:1 But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach their destructive heresies about God and even turn against their Master who bought them. Theirs will be a swift and terrible end.

- 1. This passage warns of false teachers who will deny “the Lord who bought them.”**

2. Those who deny Christ, even children of God, will be denied before God (Matt. 10:33) and be cast into the lake of fire if they do not repent. (Rev. 21:8)

Mat 10:33 But if anyone denies me here on earth, I will deny that person before my Father in heaven.

Rev 21:8 But cowards who turn away from me, and unbelievers, and the corrupt, and murderers, and the immoral, and those who practice witchcraft, and idol worshipers, and all liars—their doom is in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. This is the second death."

N. 2 Peter 3:17. Christians can fall from "steadfastness" and be led away "with the error of the wicked."

2Pe 3:17 I am warning you ahead of time, dear friends, so that you can watch out and not be carried away by the errors of these wicked people. I don't want you to lose your own secure footing.

O. Revelation 3:5.

Rev 3:5 All who are victorious will be clothed in white. I will never erase their names from the Book of Life, but I will announce before my Father and his angels that they are mine.

1. All Christians have their names written in the book of life. (Rev. 20:15)

Rev 20:15 And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.

2. Those names can be removed if they do not live faithfully. (Rev. 3:5; 22:19)

Rev 3:5 All who are victorious will be clothed in white. I will never erase their names from the Book of Life, but I will announce before my Father and his angels that they are mine.

Rev 22:19 And if anyone removes any of the words of this prophetic book, God will remove that person's share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book.

Conclusion

1. The Bible teaches that the believer is secure in his salvation in the hand of God as long as he remains faithful to the will of God and loyal to Christ. (2 Tim. 4:7-8)

2Ti 4:7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. 2Ti 4:8 And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness that the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that great day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his glorious return.

2. The word of God also teaches that a child of God can voluntarily, by his sins, separate himself from God and Christ and be lost.

3. If the child of God becomes unfaithful and does not repent, the “wages of sin,” death (Rom. 6:23), await him even though he had once been in fellowship with God.

Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

4. The Perseverance of the Saints, or “once saved always saved,” like the four tenets of Calvinism which precede it, is a false doctrine that must be rejected.

The Fall of Calvinism

The five tenets of Calvinism are so tightly and logically knit together that if you accept one, you must accept them all. Conversely, if you deny one, you must deny them all.

The Doctrines of Calvinism

T-U-L-I-P

- Total Hereditary Depravity
 - Unconditional Election
 - Limited Atonement
 - Irresistible Grace
 - Perseverance of the Saints
-
- The child of God can fall from grace (Galatians 5:4; Hebrews 6:4-6; Acts 8:9-24). The Perseverance of the Saints is not a valid doctrine.

Gal 5:3 I'll say it again. If you are trying to find favor with God by being circumcised, you must obey all of the regulations in the whole law of Moses. **Gal 5:4** For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen away from God's grace.

Heb 6:4 For it is impossible to renew to repentance those who were once enlightened, who tasted the heavenly gift, became companions with the Holy Spirit, **Heb 6:5** tasted God's good word and the powers of the coming age, **Heb 6:6** and who have fallen away, because, to their own harm, they are recrucifying the Son of God and holding Him up to contempt. **Heb 6:7** For ground that has drunk the rain that has often fallen on it, and that produces vegetation useful to those it is cultivated for, receives a blessing from God. **Heb 6:8** But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and about to be cursed, and will be burned at the end.

Act 8:9 A man named Simon had previously practiced sorcery in that city and astounded the Samaritan people, while claiming to be somebody great. **Act 8:10** They all paid attention to him, from the least of them to the greatest, and they said, "This man is called the Great Power of God!" **Act 8:11** They were attentive to him because he had astounded them

with his sorceries for a long time. Act 8:12 But when they believed Philip, as he proclaimed the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. Act 8:13 Then even Simon himself believed. And after he was baptized, he went around constantly with Philip and was astounded as he observed the signs and great miracles that were being performed. Act 8:14 When the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had welcomed God's message, they sent Peter and John to them. Act 8:15 After they went down there, they prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit. Act 8:16 For He had not yet come down on any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Act 8:17 Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Act 8:18 When Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, Act 8:19 saying, "Give me this power too, so that anyone I lay hands on may receive the Holy Spirit." Act 8:20 But Peter told him, "May your silver be destroyed with you, because you thought the gift of God could be obtained with money! Act 8:21 You have no part or share in this matter, because your heart is not right before God. Act 8:22 Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. Act 8:23 For I see you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity." Act 8:24 "Please pray to the Lord for me," Simon replied, "so that nothing you have said may happen to me."

Gal 5:3 I'll say it again. If you are trying to find favor with God by being circumcised, you must obey all of the regulations in the whole law of Moses. Gal 5:4 For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen away from God's grace.

- If a child of God can fall from grace, then God's grace must not be irresistible so the doctrine of Irresistible Grace falls.
- And if God's grace is not irresistible, then a person must be free to choose whether he will accept that grace or not. So the doctrine of Unconditional Election falls.
- And if a person is free to make the good choice to accept God's

grace, we cannot say that Christ died only for the elect. We must say, along with the apostle Paul (1 Tim. 2:6), that He died for the sins of all people. So the doctrine of Limited Atonement collapses.

1Ti 2:6 He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message that God gave to the world at the proper time.

- And if a person can make a good choice, he must not be “wholly defiled in the all the faculties of soul and mind.” Therefore, the doctrine of Total Hereditary Depravity falls.**
- The whole system of Calvinism comes crashing to the ground when one applies the Truth of Scripture to it.**

(This basic idea is from “Three Simple Scriptures,” Phil Roberts, *Plano Provoker*, August 22, 1974)

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